



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND
102 MCNAIR DRIVE
FORT MONROE, VIRGINIA 23651-1047

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

ATBO-BP

14 February 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Command Emphasis - Army Voting Assistance Program

1. References:

a. DOD Directive 1000.4, sections 5.2.1.4 through 5.2.2, 14 April 2004, subject: Federal Voting Assistance Program (Enclosure 1).

b. AR 608-20, Army Voting Assistance Program, paragraph 2-9 through 2-15, 28 October 2004 (Enclosure 2).

2. I cannot overemphasize the importance of ensuring our Soldiers and voting-age family members continue to receive maximum assistance. It is critical for Soldiers and family members to have the opportunity to cast their absentee ballot.

3. Army Regulation 608-20 outlines how the voting assistance program will be operated and underscores the critical role that Commanders play in the process. Ensure our Soldiers and family members eligible to vote receive the Federal Post Card Application and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot. Every opportunity to obtain and distribute the forms to all absentee voters should be exercised.

4. Commanders and leaders at all levels must be personally involved and must give our Soldiers and family members every opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

5. Victory Starts Here!

2 Encls

WILLIAM S. WALLACE
General, U.S. Army
Commanding

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(see next page)

ATBO-BP

SUBJECT: Command Emphasis - Army Voting Assistance Program

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5.1.15. As discussed in DoD 4525.6-M (reference (e)), implement measures, to the maximum extent practicable, to ensure that a postmark or other proof of mailing date is provided on each absentee ballot collected at any overseas location or vessel at sea and that voting materials are moved expeditiously by military postal authorities.

5.2. The Heads of the DoD Components and the Uniformed Services shall:

5.2.1. Disseminate voting information to assist eligible voters in their organization in the following ways:

5.2.1.1. Develop written policies to support all eligible military personnel and their family members including those in deployed, dispersed, and tenant organizations. Establish the ratio and maximum number of voters that may be represented by a Voting Assistance Officer based on the ratio required in subparagraph 5.2.1.4.2.

5.2.1.2. Ensure command support at all levels for the FVAP.

5.2.1.3. Designate a uniformed officer of general or flag rank in each Uniformed Service as the "Senior Service Voting Representative" to manage the respective Service voting programs. A "Service Voting Action Officer," preferably a civilian employee (GS-12 or higher), shall assist the Senior Service Voting Representative and shall be responsible for voting assistance operations within his or her Service. If the Service Voting Action Officer is a military member, he or she shall be at least of pay grade O-4, if an officer, or of pay grade E-8 if an enlisted member. The Service Voting Action Officer shall be a permanently assigned member within the Senior Service Voting Representative's organization and shall have such assistance as may be necessary to meet FVAP goals. The Chief/Director of each Reserve component shall coordinate with the Senior Service Voting Representative and the Director, FVAP, to maintain a contingency absentee voting program for the National Guard and Reserve units and personnel who have been activated and deployed.

5.2.1.4. Designate Voting Assistance Officers at every level of command.

5.2.1.4.1. Assign one Voting Assistance Officer on each installation and in each major command to coordinate the programs conducted by subordinate units and tenant commands. Each Reserve component shall also designate a Voting Assistance Officer at its Headquarters level. Where possible, Installation Voting Assistance Officers should be a civilian GS-12 or higher. If a military member is assigned as the Installation Voting Assistance Officer, that officer should hold the pay grade of O-4 or higher. Each Installation Voting Assistance Officer shall notify

installation personnel of the last date before a general Federal election by which absentee ballots must be mailed from that installation to reasonably be delivered in time to State and local election officials.

5.2.1.4.2. Designate and assign in writing a Unit Voting Assistance Officer, at the O-2/E-7 level or above within each unit of 25 or more permanently assigned members. An additional Unit Voting Assistance Officer should be assigned for each additional 50 members above the 25-member base. Unit Voting Assistance Officers shall ensure that all small and geographically separated units are assisted. When military personnel (including noncommissioned officers) are designated as Voting Assistance Officers, this Directive authorizes them to administer oaths in connection with voter registration and voting.

5.2.1.4.3. Ensure that Voting Assistance Officers are available and equipped to personally assist voters for all elections. Additionally, any person appearing to need assistance in reading or understanding English language material on voting or voter registration should receive immediate assistance in the appropriate language. Voting Assistance Officers shall be provided the time and resources needed to perform their voting assistance duties, especially during even-numbered years. Ensure that Uniformed Services members and their voting-age dependents have ready access to absentee voter registration, ballot request and absentee ballot submission information, and deadlines.

5.2.1.5. Expeditiously obtain and disseminate voting information and related materials, such as the "Voting Assistance Guide"; Standard Form (SF) 76, "Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)"; and SF 186, "Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)." To do this:

5.2.1.5.1. Purchase sufficient materials to furnish registration and ballot request support for all elections.

5.2.1.5.2. Establish a DoD Component-wide means to communicate effectively with and expeditiously disseminate voting information to Commanders, Voting Assistance Officers, and military and overseas DoD civilian members of the DoD Component and their voting age dependents. Establish within each military installation and major command a Voting Assistance Officer network and communications capability to quickly disseminate voting information throughout the installation or major command.

5.2.1.5.3. Develop a system to ensure the in-hand delivery of Federal Post Card Applications to all eligible voters. The system record keeping may include numbers or percent contacted, but may not include names (or any other identifying information) of individual citizens.

5.2.1.6. Ensure the delivery of SFs 76:

5.2.1.6.1. By January 15 of each calendar year deliver SFs 76 in-hand to eligible voters and their voting-age dependents.

5.2.1.6.2. By August 15 of even-numbered years provide SFs 76 to eligible voters, including DoD civilian employees and voting-age dependents, who are serving outside the territorial limits of the United States.

5.2.1.6.3. By September 15 of even-numbered years provide SFs 76 to eligible voters, including voting-age dependents, in the United States.

5.2.1.6.4. Before graduation and detachment from recruit training.

5.2.1.7. Ensure that adequate numbers of SFs 76 are available for military members and their voting-age dependents, and overseas DoD civilians during check-in processing as a result of permanent change of station orders and that they receive assistance in properly completing the form. These SFs 76 shall be used to notify local election officials of the change of mailing address.

5.2.1.8. Require the Inspectors General of the Military Departments to review their voting assistance program annually at every level of command to ensure compliance with DoD regulations and public law and submit their reports to the DoD Inspector General by January 31 of the following year.

5.2.1.9. Continually evaluate command voting programs.

5.2.1.10. Establish and maintain a Voting Assistance Program homepage on the DoD Component's website. This homepage shall provide DoD Component-specific information regarding its Voting Assistance Program, including links to the assigned Voting Assistance Officers (company/squadron level and above and commissioned units) within the DoD Component; procedures to order voting materials; and links to other Federal and State voting websites, including a link to the FVAP website. Designate at least one well-advertised fixed location on bases, installations, and ships where absentee voting material and voting assistance are available to all military personnel, family members, and overseas DoD civilian employees.

5.2.1.11. Develop comprehensive command-wide voting awareness and assistance programs and activities in conjunction with Armed Forces Voters Week. A special day or days shall be designated at each military installation to inform Uniformed Services members and their voting-age dependents of absentee registration and voting procedures and, minimally, of the absentee registration and ballot request deadlines preceding general elections for Federal offices.

5.2.1.12. Establish and publicize a special telephone service, the "Voting Action Line," to link unit voting officers with their respective Service or Departmental Voting Action Officer. Emphasize rapid and accurate responses and solutions to voting-oriented problems.

5.2.1.13. Provide telephone operators at every military installation with the names, e-mail addresses, and office telephone numbers of unit or installation Voting Assistance Officers.

5.2.1.14. Train all Service members (including activated National Guard and Reserve personnel) on absentee registration and voting procedures during years of elections for Federal offices. All basic training and command courses shall emphasize and advertise voting assistance programs to encourage junior Service members to register and subsequently vote and include instruction on voting rights and responsibilities and procedures on absentee registration and voting. They also shall provide training and voting assistance for units preparing for deployment where voting materials and accessibility to register may be limited due to at-sea or remote area deployment. Train all Reserve component personnel during years of elections for Federal offices on all aspects of the voting program, to include familiarity with the FPCA and the FWAB.

5.2.1.15. Require that all major command, Installation and Unit Voting Assistance Officers attend an FVAP Voting Assistance Workshop during even-numbered years with elections for Federal offices. If the installation is not scheduled to receive FVAP workshop training, Installation and Unit Voting Assistance Officers should attend training at a nearby installation. Voting Assistance Officers at remote locations can access the FVAP website for training. Document the training of Voting Assistance Officers at the installation or base level and within local personnel records.

5.2.1.16. Require commanders to rate Voting Assistance Officers on the way they perform their voting assistance duties. Commanders shall establish the evaluation criteria for Voting Assistance Officer performance within their command.

5.2.1.17. File an after-action report in the format and manner that the Director, FVAP specifies.

5.2.1.18. Assist the FVAP in conducting official surveys in the manner specified by the Director, FVAP.

5.2.2. Refrain from contacting State and local government officials about voting matters. The Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) shall be the sole DoD representative for contact and coordination with Federal, State, and local government entities for voting assistance and elections pursuant to reference (c).

5.3. In accordance with 10 U.S.C. 1566 (reference (f)), the Inspector General of the Department of Defense shall periodically conduct, at DoD installations, unannounced assessments of those installations' compliance with the provisions of reference (c) and with this Directive.

5.4. The Inspectors General of the Military Departments shall provide a report of their assessment required under subparagraph 5.2.1.8., to the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, by January 31 of each year.

5.5. Combatant Commanders: Combatant Commanders bear additional responsibility to ensure that deployed forces have access to federal voting assistance information, particularly in remote or difficult locations. Combatant Commanders shall highlight within the operational chain of command the importance they and the Department attach to participation by U.S. forces in the Federal, State, and local election process, and make every reasonable effort to assist the Military Departments in discharging the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in this Directive.

6. INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

6.1. The Statistical Analysis and Reporting requirements in paragraphs 5.1.13. and 5.2.1.18., above, have been assigned Report Control Symbol DD-DA&M(AR)1918 according to DoD 8910.1-M (reference (g)).

6.2. The after action reports referred to in subparagraph 5.2.1.17., above, are exempt from licensing in accordance with reference (g).

c. IMA region offices will appoint, in writing, a SVAO to monitor and coordinate with MACOM and installation SVAOs within their respective regions to ensure appropriate Voting Assistance Program support.

2-9. Major Army command commanders

Major Army command (MACOM) commanders will—

a. Appoint, in writing, a senior officer(s) (lieutenant colonel, colonel, or above, or DA civilian equivalent) as the SVAO(s).

b. Ensure that each subordinate senior mission and installation commander appoints SVAOs and SVAO alternates to manage the overall subordinate command program.

c. Maintain a listing of all subordinate installation SVAOs and alternates and provide the listing to higher headquarters as directed.

d. Submit recurring reports and provide information and input as required by the DA Voting Assistance Office. (Soldier training/contact data will be reported semi-annually.)

e. Ensure clear channels of communication are established throughout the MACOM down to unit level.

f. Direct internal information media to publicize all aspects of the voting information program in a timely and effective manner.

g. Establish evaluation criteria for VAO performance and ensure that VAOs' evaluation reports reflect how well they perform their voting assistance duties.

h. Consistently and continually provide command emphasis and support to the AVAP.

2-10. Installation commanders

Installation commanders will—

a. Establish an installation Voting Assistance Program that implements the Voting Assistance Program from their MACOM headquarters.

b. Ensure all unit VAOs attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop during years with elections for Federal offices.

c. Designate at least one well-advertised fixed location on the installation where absentee voting materials and assistance are available to all military personnel, DA civilian employees overseas, and their eligible family members.

d. Ensure voting assistance is provided to small and/or geographically separated units within their area of responsibility (AOR).

e. Ensure that all unit, assistant, and installation SVAOs provide their names, office telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses to installation telephone operators.

f. Ensure FPCAs are included in orientation packets for new and permanent change of station personnel.

g. Ensure personnel, including their family members, are advised to notify their local election office of their change of address.

h. Evaluate the command's voting assistance program on a continual basis.

i. Establish evaluation criteria for VAO performance and ensure that VAOs' evaluation reports reflect how well they perform their voting assistance duties.

j. Consistently and continually provide command emphasis and support to the AVAP.

k. Ensure recruits are provided FPCAs for themselves and their voting-age dependents during their recruit training.

2-11. Garrison commanders

Garrison commanders will—

a. Appoint, in writing, a SVAO who will coordinate closely with the designated SVAO of the installation to ensure high visibility publicity is provided throughout the installation's facilities.

b. Provide a fixed location where voting assistance material and assistance can be obtained by all military personnel, DA civilians overseas, and their eligible family members, regardless of the sponsor's unit of assignment on the installation.

c. Ensure voting assistance support is provided to the soldiers and DA civilians overseas who are assigned to the garrison organization and to their eligible family members.

d. Assist and support the installation commander in the coordination, publicity, and execution of the voting assistance mission.

2-12. Staff judge advocates

Staff judge advocates will—

a. Develop a working relationship with the SVAOs and VAOs.

b. Advise persons eligible to receive legal assistance on the more difficult residency questions.

2-13. Senior voting assistance officers

Senior voting assistance officers (SVAOs) will—

- a. Attend a FVAP voting assistance workshop during years with election for Federal offices.
- b. Establish a voting assistance officer network and communications capability to quickly disseminate voting information.
- c. Monitor subordinate units' voting assistance programs.
- d. Assist unit VAOs to obtain required quantities of required publications.
- (1) CONUS SVAOs follow normal support supply channels to obtain blank forms and other publications required by AVAP implementing instructions from the Media Distribution Division, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63114-6181. Order—
 - (a) A minimum of one voting assistance guide for each voting assistance officer. To view, go to <https://www.vote-army.mil>. To order, go to www.apd.army.mil.
 - (b) Other promotional materials as required.
- (2) OCONUS SVAOs order from OCONUS Regional Publications Center, for each assigned soldier and DA civilian stationed in an overseas location—
 - (a) Four SF 76s.
 - (b) One SF 186.
- e. Establish and publicize a voting action telephone line.
- f. Designate, in conjunction with the garrison commander, at least one well-advertised fixed location on the installation where absentee voting materials and assistance are available to all eligible absentee voters.
- g. Conduct an Army Voter Registration Month.
- h. Designate a day(s) to emphasize voting registration and support the week designated as Armed Forces Voters Week.
- i. Ensure that installation public affairs officers (PAO) coordinate voting information support materials through Army public affairs channels.
- j. Coordinate among PAO, staff judge advocate (SJA), publications manager, and communication and message centers to facilitate registration and voting.
- k. Ensure that nonpartisan offers to assist in the installation's voting assistance program from on-post private organizations are accepted, where appropriate, and integrated into the installation's voting assistance program.
- l. Coordinate with the servicing SJA so that the conduct of the voting assistance program remains within the limits of law and policy.
- m. Provide voting assistance to small and/or geographically separated units within your AOR.
- n. Provide voting assistance to activated members of the Army National Guard of the United States and Army Reserve when they are serving within their subordinate commands in CONUS or OCONUS.
- o. Notify Unit VAOs and eligible absentee voters of the suggested mailing deadlines for their area:
 - (1) From CONUS, not later than 14 days prior to the election.
 - (2) From OCONUS, not later than 14–30 days prior to the election.
- p. MACOM and installation SVAOs, as a minimum, will—
 - (1) Ensure 100 percent of assigned personnel are contacted and informed on the following:
 - (a) The name of unit VAO(s).
 - (b) Contact information for the VAO(s).
 - (c) Available voting materials and their location.
 - (d) Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) entitlements.
 - (2) Report soldier training/contact data semi-annually.
- q. MACOM SVAOs will maintain a listing of all subordinate installation SVAOs and their designated alternates.
 - (1) Include on the list—
 - (a) Grade or title.
 - (b) Name.
 - (c) Addresses (mailing, message, and e-mail).
 - (d) Telephone and FAX numbers (commercial and DSN).
 - (e) Date attended FVAP voting assistance workshop.
 - (2) Update and forward the list, as requested, to the Army voting action officer, at AHRC, ATTN: AHRC-PDO-IP, Alexandria, VA 22332-0474.
 - (3) Prepare and forward reports, as requested, to the Army voting action officer, at (AHRC-PDO-IP). See details from implementing instructions <https://www.vote.army.mil>.

2-14. Company/detachment commanders

Company/detachment commanders will—

- a. Appoint, in writing, unit VAOs (in the grades of first lieutenant/sergeant first class or above) in all units with 25

or more permanently assigned members. (Appoint an additional VAO for each 50 unit members above the 25-member base.)

b. Ensure that an appointed VAO can remain assigned through the election cycle or ensure that a VAO who is scheduled for reassignment is replaced before he or she leaves.

c. Provide unit VAOs the necessary administrative and logistical support to execute their responsibilities.

d. Provide soldiers the maximum opportunity to vote.

e. Provide ready access to absentee voter registration, ballot requests, and absentee submission information and deadlines.

f. Train all soldiers, including activated ARNGUS and Reserve Component, on absentee registration and voting procedures during years of Federal elections. Special attention should be provided to young soldiers or other first-time voters.

g. Establish evaluation criteria for VAO performance and ensure that VAOs' evaluation reports reflect how well they perform their voting assistance duties.

h. Consistently and continually provide command emphasis and support to the AVAP.

2-15. Voting assistance officers

Voting assistance officers (VAO) at all levels will be responsible for all aspects of the voting assistance program in the unit. The individuals appointed as VAO will—

a. Be readily available and equipped to give personal aid to voters for Federal, State, and local elections.

b. Attend an FVAP voting assistance workshop during years with elections for Federal offices.

c. Administer oaths in connection with voting registration and voting as authorized by DOD Directive 1000.4.

d. Order and distribute the SF 76.

(1) Order four SF 76s for each assigned CONUS and OCONUS soldier and each DA civilian stationed OCONUS. Go to <http://www.apd.army.mil> to order.

(2) Ensure in-hand delivery of FPCA to all uniformed absentee voters and their eligible voting family members not later than 15 January of each year.

(3) Deliver the FPCA not later than 15 August of even-numbered years to those serving outside the territorial limits of the United States and not later than 15 September of even-numbered years to those serving within the territorial limits of the United States.

(4) Deliver an FPCA to soldiers on TDY or leave upon return to their active unit. (Accomplishing delivery in unit formations or during scheduled unit training is acceptable.)

(5) Ensure that delivery of the FPCA is done in an informational, not coercive, way. The idea is to get the forms to soldiers who want them, not to coerce soldiers to use them.

(6) Inform voters of the FPCA and absentee ballot mailing deadlines to meet their State ballot receipt deadlines.

(7) Inform voters of States that accept faxed FPCA and voted ballots.

(8) Distribute FVAP coversheets to voters wishing to FAX FPCAs or ballots where eligible.

e. Order one SF 186 (Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)) for each assigned soldier and DA civilian stationed outside of the United States. (Go to www.apd.army.mil to order.)

(1) Inform overseas voters about the use of the FWAB if the State absentee ballot is not received on time.

(2) Ensure that voters are informed of the following criteria for SF 186 (FWAB):

(a) Application for a regular absentee ballot must have been received by the local election official at least 30 days prior to the general election.

(b) The FWAB is a back-up ballot that may be submitted only from outside the United States (that is, the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa).

(c) Some States accept a FWAB mailed from within the United States. See the Voting Assistance Guide <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag.html> for more information (Details for ordering the current year's Voting Assistance Guide can be found at <http://www.apd.army.mil/>).

(d) Inform the voter that, under the law, the local election official must receive the FWAB no later than the deadline for receipt of regular absentee ballots.

f. Assist, in a language they understand, any person who appears to need assistance in reading or understanding English language material relating to voter registration or voting.

g. Encourage access to the FVAP Web site (www.fvap.gov) for all voting materials and information. All States accept the online version of the FPCA on this Web site.

h. Provide their office telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to the telephone operators at their installations.